

A UNIFIED PEOPLE

—WEEK 2—

If you have ever played on a sports team or worked for a business, you know that unity is vital. If a team is not on the same page and each player is frustrated with one another then the team is destined to fail. You can't win a championship when everyone wants to run their own play. You will never even win a game when every player is playing for themselves. Team unity is vital.

The same thing can happen in the workplace. It can be miserable to go to work every day when everyone hates each other. If you always have to look over your back because people might be trying to destroy you or your reputation. If you know that everyone is against you and no one is for you, you will grow frustrated. Unity is vital to our jobs too.

Our Church Covenant reads: “We will work and pray for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace among this fellowship.”

Unity and peace are vital to our church. Without peace, the church would be a miserable place to show up to on Sundays. Without peace, we will choke out our growth in Christlikeness. Without peace, our mission would stall out completely.

Peace is more vital to the church than any organization because the gospel is at stake. Jesus “who is our peace” (Eph. 2:14) has made peace by the blood of the cross (Col. 1:20). When we are at each other's throats we are lying about the peace won for us.

But peace does not come without effort. We must work for peace among our fellowship. We must fight for peace. The enemy would love nothing more than to destroy our unity. If he destroys our unity, he destroys our gospel witness as disciples who are called by our Savior to love one another.

We must be ruthless in fighting and protecting our unity. Paul tells the church at Ephesus to “not let the sun go down on your anger,” (Ephesians 5:26). Jesus even tells us: “If you are offering your gift at the altar and there you remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift at the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift,” (Matthew 5:23-24).

As a church body, we must be committed to keep short accounts. We must be committed to repent and say “I'm sorry” to one another often. We must do whatever it takes to make

things right when we have made things wrong. Because we want to adorn the beauty of the gospel that Jesus has won for us.

Unity and peace will not come without prayer. Peace is supernatural. We can work at peace as much as we want but without the Spirit of God supernaturally making us one we will not have unity. Jesus prayed that we would be one in John 17. If Jesus knows that peace will not come without the supernatural power of God at work, we must believe the same. We must pray for peace. For the joy of our church family. For the glory of God.

Meditate on God's Word

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God." —Matthew 5:9

"If possible, so far as it depends on you, leave peaceably with all." —Romans 12:18

"I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." —Ephesians 4:1-3

"Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord." —Hebrews 12:14

Questions for Application

1. Read Matthew 5:9 again. How does our peace as a church make us like our heavenly Father? Reflect on the Father making peace with us through the work of Christ.
2. What can we do as a church to make sure we are working and striving for peace with one another? What would a church look like that is ruthlessly fighting for peace with each other?
3. Why is a unified church such a powerful witness to the gospel? How can a disunified church be so destructive to our church's witness?

Close your Community Group by praying for the unity of the church.